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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Minor typographical errors in paragraphs [0025], [0027] and [0034] have been corrected as identified in the above noted amendments.

A total of 26 claims remain pending in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed December 13, 2005, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, claims 1, 15 and 16 have been cancelled. Claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of claim 1. Claims 5-9, 11 and 14 have been amended to depend upon amended claim 2. Claim 17 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 15 and intervening claim 16. Claims 24 and 28 have been amended to depend upon amended claim 17.

Claims 2-14 and 17-29 remain pending.

In preparing the above-noted amendments, careful attention was paid to ensure that no new subject matter has been introduced.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-4, 10-14, 17, 23 and 25-29.

Claims 1, 5-9, 15, 16 and 24 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0103921 (Nair et al.).

The Examiner's rejections under 35 USC 102(e) are believed to be traversed by the above-noted claim amendments. In particular, rejected independent claims 1 and 15 have been cancelled and allowed claims 2 and claim 17 have been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the respective base claims and any intervening claims. In addition, rejected claims 5-9 have been amended to depend upon amended claim 2, claim 16 has been cancelled and rejected claim 24 has been amended to depend upon amended claim 17. It is submitted that pending claims 2-14 and 17-29 present subject matter that is not taught or suggested by Nair et al. and therefore present allowable subject matter.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited reference. Thus it is believed that the

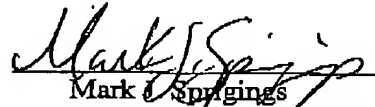
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patent application is in a condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is
courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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